

Sept 21, 2005
1300hrs.

Lt. Allen
USCG Station Umpqua
Winchester Bay, Oregon 97467

Re: Request from Ken Reeves, USCG Portland for a written statement from me concerning a fishing trip on the Sydney May 11, of Pacific Pioneer Charters, home port, Winchester Bay, Oregon, on May 20, 2005.

Lt. Allen;

On this date, I was scheduled for and arrived at the office of Pacific Pioneer at 06:00 for a 06:30 Halibut fishing trip. No one was there, the lights were out and the place looked dingy at best. Across the street, the Strike Zone Charter people had a brightly lit office, customers standing around enjoying coffee, pastry and the like. At between 06:30 and 07:00, all the Strike Zone customers were sent home because the weather was too severe to go out, (I could only assume this after the fact.) At close to 07:00 I saw someone walk down to the dock where the Sydney May was birthed and decided to walk down to see what was going on. Who I found boarding the boat was the deck hand. I said something to him like "I guess this is a scrub; everyone else has cancelled out". His reply was "Well, some people think about going fishing and some people go" and with that, he said we were going. Capt. Oba stumbled out of the cabin; apparently he had stayed on the boat all night; started the engines and took people on board.

At this point, with one person still not on board, he proceeded to give a safety orientation that was about as minimal and as "bare bones" as I have ever seen. There was no demonstration of any of the safety gear; he indicated briefly the location of where the "personal flotation devices" were located, said something about a life raft and that was it.

TAKE SPECIAL NOTE NOW!!!!!! This is when things really got interesting.

1. When we left this day, it was under a small craft advisory.
2. The only two people on board with flotation devices on their bodies were the Capt. and his deck hand.
3. The ocean swells were so bad that waves were breaking over the flying bridge on the boat.
4. In the two and a half to three hour trip to "Big Chicken", everybody was beat to a pulp; poles coming down on there heads and everything in the cabin flying around.

5. Freeboard on this boat was nowhere near adequate and it was an absolute miracle no one went over board.
6. On return to port, we were met with medical staff at the dock; QUESTION, Who knew what and when.

OPINION: The Captain of this vessel has breached legal, fiduciary and moral responsibilities to the customers he has advertised for. He may have falsely advertised as well; claiming that he was "blessed by the USCG" (so-to-speak). This person has not been forthright and honest and by all indications, has been motivated primarily by money. He has an attitude problem; he feels that he is invincible and superior to all other charter operators.

Recommendation: Get this "turkey" off the water permanently before he kills anyone else.

Roger Branscomb

